

# *Sketch*

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## The Worm Sandwich

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# The Worm Sandwich

Allen Koessel

## **Abstract**

THE morning was damp and overcast. As my younger sister followed me down the sagging, wooden steps, the warm moist air surrounding us carried a rich, earthy scent that teased our young senses...

# The Worm Sandwich

*by Allen Koessel*

*A.A. Ad., Freshman*

THE morning was damp and overcast. As my younger sister followed me down the sagging, wooden steps, the warm moist air surrounding us carried a rich, earthy scent that teased our young senses. After a long moment of hesitation, we stepped down onto the wet blocks of concrete leading us into the sweatiness of the early fall morning.

We left the concrete and glided over the wet morning grass. The moisture quickly soaked the toes of our "Penny's" tennis shoes and the rolled cuffs of our jeans. After a quick game of two-man tag, Meri Lynn and I jumped onto the blackness of the street that passed our home. We returned to the curb and enacted follow-the-leader, each of us balanced precariously on the thin cement curb. While we drifted easily and aimlessly through the quietness of the morning, an ancient, scarred gravel truck that bore "City Maintenance Dept." on its doors maneuvered around the corner and parked next to a drain in our curb.

An old, round-bellied man emerged from the cab, reached for a shovel in the back of the truck, and took several steps toward the drain. A tattered, blue coat outlined his stooped frame and partially covered a pair of soiled coveralls that had a tear in the left leg the shape of the continent of Africa. His boots were caked with mud that matched the grime on his face. Several days' beard covered the upper part of his jaw line and two eyes peered from under a sports hat that probably belonged to Al Capone. With one professional lunge of his shovel, he exposed a thick carpet of earth worms.

Meri Lynn and I squatted on the curb a safe distance from the squirming mass while the man with the Africa pants shoveled several loads of sand and worms into the rear of the truck. I had never seen so many worms at one time in my short life and I asked the man how he had found this mass of sticky bodies so easily.

"Practice," he answered, "after a while you know where to find 'em."

"You mean you hunt for worms?" Meri Lynn asked.

He hesitated for a moment, then replied, "Yep, I'd say . . ." He was interrupted by our mother calling us for lunch, but neither of us moved. We sat waiting for this pried piper of worms to finish exposing his thoughts. "I'd say that I'm probably one of the most dedicated worm hunters in town," he continued proudly. The drain was almost clear of sand when the order for dinner was clearly repeated. "Nope," he said to no one, "just can't miss a worm." He lifted his Al Capone hat and wiped the sweat from his forehead with a greasy red handkerchief.

As my sister turned to leave for lunch, I paused for a moment. "What do you have for lunch?"

The old man replaced his Al Capone hat on his head and leaned thoughtfully on his shovel. The wind wrestled with the skin-tone map of Africa on his pant leg. "Oh, . . . a worm sandwich," he said.

## Haiku

*by Earl Keyser*

*English Graduate*

Early sunset rests  
on children's faces and hands,  
measuring their dreams